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ABSTRACT

One hundred unmarried female students, 18 to 21 years old, took the California F Scale and the Hewer-Neubeck Marriage and Employment Questionnaire. Authoritarianism was found significantly related to acceptance or rejection of many specific reasons offered for a woman's working or not working after marriage for subjects themselves, their perceived motives of other women, and value normative statements. For personal motives, rejection of items depicting an equalitarian role for women was positively related to authoritarianism, as was acceptance of a traditional conception of woman's role. Items which indicated nurturant attitudes or striving for self-fulfillment were unrelated to authoritarianism. Authoritarian women were more rejecting than accepting of their own working. Other women were seen as more willing to work and also willing to work for equalitarian and self-fulfillment motives not personally endorsed by high authoritarianism subjects. Authoritarianism was associated with seeing oneself more in line with cultural imperatives than other women are, although there were indications of a lack of ego-syntonicity in some motives of authoritarian subjects. (Author)

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Authoritarianism and Attitudes Toward Working Wives

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Over a decade ago, Rossi (1964, p. 106) pointed out that in our culture "for the first time in the history of any known society, motherhood has become a full-time occupation for adult women." Yet, in spite of considerable social change in recent years, the employment outside the home of married women, particularly those with children, remains a somewhat controversial issue in our society.

Hewer and Neubeck (1964; Note 2), studying opinions of incoming freshmen at a large midwestern university, found questionnaire responses endorsing either a traditional-nurturant or an equalitarian-self-fulfilling role for women. Their subjects tended to endorse more strongly the items related to traditional stances, saw their beliefs in line with cultural imperatives, and tended to see other women as sharing these beliefs.

The attitude syndrome of authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) has been demonstrated to underlie some conservatism and traditionalism in values. Recent research (Goldberg, Note 1; Lott, 1973; Kahoe, 1974; Kahoe & Meadow, Note 3) has reported negative relationships between authoritarianism and endorsement of women's liberation. Although authoritarianism can be expected to be associated with a general tendency to be rejecting of the employment of married women, there are many possible reasons why a women may or may not choose employment after marriage. The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between authoritarianism and specific opinions about the motives for employment of married women.

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Method

Subjects

Subjects were 104 unmarried, female college students, ages 18 to 21, randomly selected from the psychology subject pool of a large midwestern university. The age limits of 18 to 21 placed subjects within the normal age range for undergraduate college students; most of the subjects were sophomores. Since married subjects might have had some of the questions concerning working wives resolved for themselves in circumstantial ways, unmarried subjects were selected.

Instrument

Subjects were administered a booklet containing the 29-item final revised version of the California F scale (Byrne, 1965), a common measure of authoritarianism, and the Hewer-Neubeck Marriage and Employment Questionnaire. Subjects responded to each F scale item on a 6-point scale ranging from "disagree very much" to "agree very much." For each item on the Hewer-Neubeck instrument, subjects indicated (a) personal acceptance or rejection of the item, (b) the position they thought most women would take, and (c) what they thought ought to be the position regarding the item (the perceived cultural imperative).

Data Analysis

A single F scale score was obtained for each subject by summing the weighted item scores. These total authoritarianism scores were correlated (point biserial correlations) with each Hewer-Neubeck item in each of the three manners of responding. Patterns of correlations were examined in relation to the *a priori* categories of traditional, equalitarian, nurturant, and self-fulfilling motives for working or not working.

Results

Table 1 lists the number of items in each of the a priori categories

--Insert Table 1 about here--

which are positively, negatively, and not significantly related to authoritarianism. Table 2 lists those items on the Hewer-Neubeck questionnaire

--Insert Table 2 about here--

which have a significant relationship to authoritarianism in at least one of the three response modes: personal reasons, motives attributed to other women, and value normative responses.

Discussion

The hypothesis that authoritarianism would be associated with being more rejecting than accepting of one's own working after marriage is supported by these data. Of 27 reasons for working, endorsement of five and rejection of nine were related to authoritarianism. A few nurturant items related to family were approved by high authoritarian subjects, but nurturance extending to society as a whole was rejected. Self-fulfillment motives concerned with enjoyment or personal inclination were rejected, while a few concerned with self-improvement were accepted. Equalitarian motives, however, were uniformly rejected. Rejection of three reasons for not working--two self-fulfillment and one nurturant--was associated with authoritarianism. The three reasons accepted for not working were traditional ones.

The only two variables clearly opposed to each other in relation to authoritarianism are traditionalism and equalitarianism, with traditionalism being positively and equalitarianism negatively related to authoritarianism. The findings support an interpretation of the authoritarian individual as one who is conventional, submissive and stereotyped in perception of values, and overly-concerned with sex-role distinctions.

Because of the poor mental health connotations of authoritarianism, one can conclude that some aspects of the strongly traditional attitudes indicate a lack of maturity or flexibility in outlook. To the extent that the equalitarian motives were negatively related to authoritarianism, equalitarianism has some positive mental health connotations. This replicates previous findings on liberal attitudes about sex roles (Kahoe, 1974; Kahoe & Meadow, Note 3). Since most of the nurturance and self-fulfillment items were not significantly related to authoritarianism in either direction, nothing can be said about their mental health connotations.

Authoritarian women see other women as more accepting of working after marriage than they are, accepting 12 and rejecting six of 27 reasons for working. Although the motives attributed to other women include some accepted by authoritarian women for themselves, they also include some specifically rejected by them. Other women are seen as working primarily for self-fulfillment motives. They were seen as divided on nurturance and equalitarian motives, accepting some and rejecting others. Authoritarianism was associated with seeing other women accepting one each traditional, equalitarian, and self-fulfillment motives for not working, while they rejected one nurturance and three traditional reasons.

Some expected results are found regarding normative values. Authoritarianism was found related to seeing oneself meeting the norm on eight reasons not accepted by other women, while others meet it in three places not personally accepted. In addition, high authoritarian subjects see themselves opposing the value norm on only one reason and other women doing so on five. The areas in which high authoritarianism is related to seeing oneself alone in accord with the norm are the endorsement of traditionalism and the rejection of equalitarianism. In contrast to themselves, authoritarian women see other women as

meeting the norm by endorsing some other equalitarianism items and rejecting other traditionalism ones.

Other women are seen following the value norm in rejecting some sex-role stereotypes which high authoritarian subjects do not reject. This suggests that the authoritarian woman's traditional deference to men in these regards may not be entirely ego-syntonic. Additional unrest in the authoritarian woman is suggested by her seeing both herself and other women violating value norms in their failure to endorse several nurturance and equalitarian reasons.

Although high authoritarianism is associated with seeing other women as appropriately rejecting some stereotyped sex-role motives, it is also associated with seeing other women as wrongly accepting some equalitarian and self-fulfillment motives. These motives attributed to other women, which are seen as violations of standards, might be those which the authoritarian woman would have to deny personal expression in order to cast herself in a traditional mold, and the attribution may be the projection of unacceptable personal motives.

Those areas in which high authoritarianism is associated with seeing both self and other women in agreement with value norms are likely those in which the authoritarian woman feels secure and ego-syntonic. These five items suggest acceptance of mutual decision-making in marriage and the man's financial responsibility, as well as rejection of seeing homemaking as lacking challenge, working because other women do, and being concerned over taking jobs from men. In these regards, the authoritarian woman probably experiences a comfortable submission to her idealized behavior codes.

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Table 1

Number of Items Related to Authoritarianism

In A Priori Categories

Category	Relationship	Your Reason	Reason of Most Women	Should Be Reason
Traditional	positive	6	3	6
	negative	2	5	2
	not significant	4	4	4
Equalitarian	positive	0	5	2
	negative	7	2	6
	not significant	5	5	4
Self-fulfilling	positive	2	7	1
	negative	3	0	3
	not significant	6	4	7
Nurturant	positive	2	4	4
	negative	1	2	0
	not significant	6	3	5

Table 2

Hewer-Neubeck Items Related to Authoritarianism

Item	Your Reason	Reason of Most Women	Should Be Reason
Reasons Why Women Hold Jobs After They Are Married:			
to meet financial responsibilities	n.s.	n.s.	.21
because they want to try out what they have been specifically trained for	.42	.19	n.s.
because the working world is more exciting and stimulating than staying home	n.s.	.26	-.30
so as not to lose social contacts	-.41	n.s.	-.28
to provide an opportunity to work with others who have similar interests	.33	.28	n.s.
in order to enjoy working in their field of specialization	n.s.	n.s.	.29
because housework provides inadequate opportunity for the expression of intellectual interests	n.s.	.33	n.s.
because it makes them more interesting people	.20	n.s.	.51
because of the shortage of workers in their field of training	-.45	-.67	.20
to meet an obligation to society to use their training	.36	n.s.	.56
to earn extra money to spend on themselves	n.s.	.37	n.s.
so their husband can complete their education	n.s.	n.s.	.48
to increase their job security if their husbands can't support them	n.s.	-.66	n.s.
to provide their children with special training, such as music lessons, etc.	n.s.	.35	n.s.

Table 2 (continued)

Item	Your Reason	Reason of Most Women	Should Be Reason
to buy more things for home and family	.33	.72	n.s.
because they owe it to themselves to make use of their abilities	n.s.	-.60	.57
because there is not enough work in the home if there are no children	n.s.	.50	.28
so they can have a life of their own	-.44	.45	n.s.
to prove they are equal to men in ability	-.41	n.s.	n.s.
so they can buy new clothes and dress attractively	-.25	.36	n.s.
because they enjoy getting dressed up every day	-.49	.33	n.s.
because they become nervous staying home with children all the time	n.s.	-.40	-.44
because housework and care of children are too routine	-.29	.51	n.s.
because it is the thing to do, since so many other women are employed	-.64	-.66	-.25
because staying home does not allow sufficient challenge of talents (art, music, writing, etc.)	-.26	-.67	-.43
Reasons Why Women Do Not Hold Jobs After They Are Married:			
because they are needed in the home if there are preschool children	.19	-.69	.67
because they are needed in the home if there are schoolage children	n.s.	n.s.	.55
because they would feel guilty if they did not stay home and take care of their children	n.s.	.32	n.s.
because they don't want to get used to a double income	-.58	.40	-.35

Table 2 (continued)

Item	Your Reason	Reason of Most Women	Should Be Reason
because they could not handle both responsibilities, the home and the job	-.21	n.s.	-.37
because it would take jobs away from men	-.27	-.59	-.28
because it would make their husbands feel "less of a man"	n.s.	-.22	-.24
because men are responsible for the financial care of their families	.23	.35	.21
because husbands would lose their drive and incentive	n.s.	-.37	-.24
because they like the freedom in the home to arrange their work and hours	.46	n.s.	.19
because they can wear any clothes they wish	n.s.	n.s.	-.25
Other Attitudes About Women Working After Marriage:			
The decision whether a wife works is made by husband and wife together.	.36	.45	.60
The decision whether a wife works is made by the husband.	-.68	n.s.	n.s.
The decision whether a wife works is made by the wife.	-.57	n.s.	-.48
Difficulties are likely to arise in marital adjustment when the wife works.	.20	n.s.	n.s.

DF = 102; r = .19, $p < .05$; r = .25, $p < .01$; r = .32, $p < .001$.